

Amherst Recycling & Refuse Management Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 7, 2012 • Department of Public Works • Conference Room, 4:30PM

Attending: Susan Morrello, Cristina Cox Fernandes, Laurel Dickey, Brenda Davies, John Root, Meg Vickery, Susan Waite. Visitor Dan Rivera (Amherst College student and Town Meeting member).

Absent: Sue Cairn.

May meeting minutes unanimously approved.

Updates:

- Dan Rivera wants to reduce the number of plastic bags used in Amherst and is interested in bringing a ban before Town Meeting. Los Angeles passed a ban recently. He explained aspects of the environmental impact. Explains why compostable plastic bags and paper bags are not a good option. He proposes that Amherst institute a fee on all disposable shopping bags. Fee would encourage positive behavior. Ireland has done this, and saw a 90% reduction. The issue of a possible incentive was brought up. The question of asking businesses to do this as well as moving towards foam free may more than they can accommodate at once. Dan will speak with the Chamber of Commerce and come back to the committee with information on how the business community feels about this.
- Foam Free Sub Committee Update- Subcommittee planned a focus group to collect input about potential foam ban from area businesses, Sent letters to 14 businesses to invite them to a forum/ focus group (June 6), and made follow-up calls. No one could attend. The new plan is to talk to the restaurants individually, about individual issues. A hopeful note: located a local distributor (Greenfield) who is helpful at finding best prices for foam alternatives for the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District. Using this supplier might help with bulk buying.
- Taste of Amherst – Susan W. will send email to Dan about volunteer opportunities at the Taste. There will be 3 sorting stations. Volunteers and organizers will be available from Amity House and Vita Nova. Need more volunteers and we will try to recruit from high school environmental team, NOFA, CESA, Transition Amherst, Hitchcock Center, MassPIRG. Seattle's education materials on event composting/recycling were made available on line and Susan W. now has and will work with to make signage that we need. UMass will provide wheeled totes and the DPW has some, as well – Susan W. is hoping to have 6 “receptacles” per tent (2 of each compost, trash and recycling). Sue M. will give info to Susan W. about electronic sign-up of volunteers.
- Review final landfill alternatives report – John will gather suggested edits and a final vote will be taken at the next meeting.
- New Business:
 - o Amherst Waste Survey update – 970 on-line + 20 hard copy. About 9% return rate thus far. Survey will be open for one more week. Susan W. provided a preliminary reporting of the results.
 - o With Meg leaving the committee, there is a vacant seat.
 - o Conversation about possibly adjusting the committee's meeting time.
 - o Sue M. motions that we change the membership of the foam subcommittee to 3 members from 5 members (Brenda, Sue M., and Cristina). Passed unanimously.